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Journal Entry #1

Honors Humanities

The Plague

Summary: To begin “The Plague,” the narrator gets straight into description introducing the characters and unfortunate events taking place. As of right now in the story, the narrator seeks to be anonymous until further.

The setting begins in the Algerian city of Oran where a doctor named Bernard Rieux starts noticing a few dead rats lying around. After his wife went out of town, people became very ill and more rats began to swarm the city floor. With the dead rats came infection. People started become fatally ill with rashes and swelling on odd parts of their bodies. A man named M. Michel, who is the concierge of the work office of Dr. Rieux, starts to get swelling in his armpits, neck and groin. Trying to make matters better, a journalist named Raymond Rambert published a few articles in the paper to get government help. The only thing the government did was periodically clean up the rats. Nobody knew what the town was in store for!

Analysis: I actually think this part of the book is an easy read. The topic caught my attention right away because I already had a little background information about the bubonic plague. The start of the book was very interesting because it got straight into detail like some of the plays we looked at earlier in the year. I also found interest in the way the other pushed detail. I can somewhat relate to everything he was writing.

Application: The inherited human characteristics seen in this section so far are hard to determine. The development of the characters is very strong, but something is lacking in the actual plot. There was no signification of a response to a religion, belief, or spirituality. All in all, I would determine that the three most relevant human characteristics that have shaped each character to span time and culture are leadership, fear and education.

The leadership role seemed to be taken by the journalist. He was the man that reached out to get support from the government and let everyone know what was going on. Many people saw the rats and were disgusted, but didn’t think to do much. “When leaving his surgery on the morning of April 16, Dr. Bernard Rieux felt something soft under his foot. It was a dead rat lying in the middle of the landing.” The doctor’s only questioning was considering how the rat got there, until later when it was realized what he was up against. The job was left up to Raymond Rambert to show the public the truth of the matter.

When there were many dead rodents popping up on streets, the town’s people were very ambiguous about the whole situation. It was obvious that the dead rats were disgusting, but fear wasn’t a big part of the way the spent their days. The interaction between the people and transportation was the same, but there were questions passed along here and there.

To wrap up the response of the people, it was evident that there was a lack of education. There wasn’t a lack of education in a sense that everyone stupid, but just ignorant about the truth. Many people were getting sick with weird cases of swelling and it began to spread, but the lack of knowledge about, we know today to be the plague, was disguised. Dr. Rieux said “Don’t feel alarmed,” to one of his patients and then just reported the sickness after a large exposure of rodents to the police. Not knowing what the seriousness of the rodents were, made a lot of things worse.